

Patricia K. Sanieski
71 Oldefield Farms Road
Enfield, CT 06082
February 28, 2021

Re: House bill 6517

To Whom It May Concerned;

My name is Patricia K. Sanieski and I live in Enfield, CT. I am writing in full support of House bill 6517. I submit my testimony as an educator who has worked with dyslexic children for the past 40 years. This is my written testimony.

I have devoted my entire professional career to working with students with dyslexia, and more recently with their teachers. I am a Fellow of the Orton Gillingham Academy, trained in the Orton-Gillingham approach. Orton-Gillingham (known as OG) is a multisensory, structured instructional approach to teaching reading, spelling, and writing. It has been considered the “gold standard” for intervention for students with dyslexia since the 1930’s. My many years of work with students, while using OG, has been the most rewarding experience. I met these students when they were defeated, had low self-esteem, felt stupid, and had lost their natural curiosity or motivation to learn. During our work together in OG, they began to be less angry, took pride in their work, and trusted they could learn to read. Often one would say to me, “Why didn’t someone tell me that before?”, or “I get it now that you explained it to me.” I saw these students begin to shine, went on and completed high school, attended college, and establish productive lives.

Teachers cannot teach what they do not know. I graduated from Southern Connecticut University in 1975 with a degree in Early Childhood Education. I was licensed to teach children in grades K-6 but I was not taught how to teach reading to all my students. As I began my teaching career, I had to search out professional development opportunities to better equip myself with techniques, strategies, and material to better serve all my students. During this research I discovered Orton-Gillingham. Over the years I continued my OG journey and now I am an OG trainer of teachers.

I have worked with individual teachers, who have been on a journey, similar to my own, looking for more – more knowledge and skills to be able to teach all their students and usually paying out of pocket for this needed training. School districts have also begun to reach out (finally) for help to train multiple teachers to better serve students in their district, so they do not need outside tutors or consultants to assist with dyslexic students. This structured, multisensory approach (OG) is of benefit to ALL students and ALL teachers. I feel all teachers, no matter their area or level need to teach their students the language of their subject. They need this approach so ALL students can better access the language of English, Math, Science, history, etc. At least, all preservice teacher candidates must include dyslexia training in a multisensory structured language approach as well as a supervised practicum experience before they graduate and reach their first teaching position. This requirement is critical for all Connecticut teacher candidates and a must for the State of Connecticut.

I fully support House bill 6517.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia K. Sanieski